

Lincoln School Parents' Association Meeting Minutes – October 8, 2009

The meeting was called to order at 8:45am.

Communications Report:

The LSPA has approved the use of and transition to Constant Contact's email solution to deliver the weekly LincLetter. The solution provides a nice layout and the ability to read the news articles right in the body of the email – no "second click" to get to an attachment. Lincoln is the last school in the district to adopt this solution. Although the cost is fairly nominal (\$125/year) the biggest barrier had been a working website on which to store attachments.

Besides the news being in the body of the email, the system has other advantages, namely: 1) there can now be active links to the LSPA site, including current and archived forms, 2) there will be no limits to what can be published (before, it had to fit on 2 pages), 3) it facilitates better list and database management for other targeted communications, 4) it gives the communications team a summary of whether the email was opened, providing ease of follow-up, 5) it will simplify the amount and type of work that the typists will need to do, 6) it should allow the deadline for submissions to be shortened, getting more news out to the community, and 7) it should also allow Kate Scanlon and the school staff to communicate more frequently than the current bi-monthly format.

Based on this decision, no paper copies of the LincLetter will be distributed once the Constant Contact solution is in place, hopefully by the end of November. All current and archived letters will be available at www.lincolnsipa.org. There are still 23 families who have yet to provide an email address, so Ann Olmsted plans to create a written alert in advance of this change to a paperless communication system.

5th Grade Committee's Report – Part 1 (Babysitting):

Sheryl Stein and Anita Collasante reported that the 5th graders would once again be providing babysitting support for parents during the October conferences (October 21-23). This year, the process will be slightly more formal, requesting that all children be pre-registered with full contact information. Signs will be posted on doors explaining this pre-registration process. The committee is also considering increasing the rate. This will also be posted with the pre-registration info, but payment will be at time of drop-off. The babysitting will most likely be held in the gym, and they have already secured ~3-5 parents/shift.

Lynn Vozella, School Nurse:

Lynn provided the LSPA with an update on the seasonal and H1N1 flus and the school districts plans. First, both types of flu will hit simultaneously this fall, and while the population may have some immunities to the seasonal flu, few (except those above the age of 70) have been exposed and therefore have immunities to H1N1. Both forms of flu have the same symptoms: quick onset of a fever above 100.4°F, weakness/malaise, dry cough or sore throat, and possible runny nose.

The following are steps to prevent the spread of flu: 1) Vaccination. The Winchester schools are fortunate in that the Board of Health petitioned and received approval for in-school clinics – one of only a handful of communities to have these. 2) More frequent surface cleaning and hand-washing. It's happening in the classrooms ("pump in, pump out" mantra with sanitizing dispensers and emphasis on hand washing in bathrooms and at meals) but Lynn encouraged the same emphasis at home. 3) Video. The children will be seeing an engaging video that provides good practices like coughing into your elbow and covering up sneezes. 4) Tracking illnesses. Each school nurse has been asked to track absenteeism for signs that the number of flu-like illnesses is rising. This is especially important so that they can proactively alert those students or staff that may be immuno-compromised.

On October 20, Lincoln will hold its clinic for the seasonal flu vaccine, most likely in the library. So far, ~150 students have been signed up to receive the flu mist (it contains a live but attenuated form of the virus) and ~50 students have signed up for the shot. If a child has never received a flu vaccine before, they will need a booster 28 days after the initial vaccine, which should be arranged through the child's pediatrician.

As the 28-day waiting period also applies between the seasonal and the H1N1 vaccine, the earliest Lincoln students can get the H1N1 vaccine is November 17th. The permission and registration for the H1N1 will be different, in that all communications and forms will be physically mailed to homes. The same choices, mist or shot, will be offered.

For both vaccines, parents are not allowed to be present as it adds distraction, children will be held and watched for 15 minutes to ensure no adverse reaction to the vaccine, no child will be forced to receive the vaccine if he/she becomes agitated (parents will be informed afterwards if a child does NOT receive the vaccine), and if a child has a fever, the vaccine will not be administered.

Finally, Lynn touched briefly on head lice. The most important “new” information is that the school nurses are no longer required to check for head lice; it is now the responsibility of parents to do this at home. Lynn shared information on how to tell the difference between nits and louse, how to treat, and provided a URL with information – www.schoolnurse.com/medinfo/lice.scientific.html

Secretary’s Report:

The minutes from the LSPA meeting held on September 10, 2009 were distributed and approved.

Treasurer’s Report:

The Treasurer’s report ending September 30 was reviewed and approved. The closing balance at the end of the month was \$32,845.53. Revenue from the Direct Appeal was recorded at \$8,597, down versus last year, but it looks more severe due to timing [see Donna Salvatore’s report from Ways and Means, below.] The Welcome Back Dinner appears to be a net positive, but not all bills from D’Agostino’s are reflected in September.

Finally, Jen Pagan commented that the new check reimbursement process is great, but expressed caution that the outer envelope and markings may look like junk mail – do not throw away your checks! She will send out some information to the chairs alerting them of the change and what to look for.

If anyone has receipts to submit for reimbursement, please go to www.lincolnspace.org, complete the form, and send to Jen Pagan for tax filing.

Please refer to the Treasurer’s Report dated 09/30/09 for further details about revenue and expenses.

Ways and Means Report:

Donna Salatore informed the LSPA that, as of the most recent information, the Direct Appeal (DA) has collected over \$13,000, with ~30% of all families participating. The on-line PayPal system seems to be working well. There’s a slight glitch to accessing the funds, but the Co-Presidents are fixing it with PayPal as of this meeting. Since the DA had garnered almost \$14,000 at the end of September last year, we are still slightly behind. There is an opportunity not only to increase the total revenue but also to increase participation: only 70% of families participated last year. The committee will continue making a push to contribute.

Co-President’s Report:

Bridget Stump congratulated the Welcome Back Dinner committee on another great event. Approximately 500 parents and children attended, and everyone seemed to have a wonderful time making new and meeting old acquaintances. There were some complaints about running out of food. Given the LSPA has no storage capabilities, we plan to run out of food. There was also an observation that some people treat the event as an “all u can eat” buffet. Good ideas to manage and communicate with late registrants and late arrivals (e.g., a higher fee, a cut-off for serving) were discussed at the meeting and will be considered by next year’s committee.

5th Grade Committee's Report – Part 2:

Lynn Phillips and Lori Scully reported that the first meeting for the 5th grade committee occurred two weeks ago with good turn-out. The "Growing Up and Reaching Out" committee has adopted a theme of community service this year, and already, a group of 5th graders have made a visit to Mt. Vernon House to do planting and outdoor work.

Lynn and Lori asked the LSPA for immediate funding to buy T-shirts to wear all year. This year's 5th grade class is 67 students strong, and each T-shirt will cost between \$7 and \$9. Sue Costello and the students will do the design. Given the emphasis on a more community-based theme for the 5th graders, having the T-shirts now allows for a more visible "team" to be seen around our community. Also, the students can sign each other's T-shirts, making them a more personal memento. The only hesitation broached was that the T-shirts have historically been a year-end gift. This point was discussed, but the cost of the T-shirts vis-à-vis the budget will also allow for a modest year-end gift.

The proposal for immediate funding was approved by the Co-Presidents.

Technology Update:

Chuck Pickelhaupt reported that traffic on the new LSPA website, www.lincolnspace.org, is increasing steadily and is now at a level of 10-25 visitors per day. Individual content owners (e.g., Lynn Vozzella) are updating their own information on the LSPA site, and more and more content is being proposed (e.g., Sue Costello would like to post art.) The School District is okay with this activity as long as pages are password-protected and require permission to access; privacy and protection of children is a well-considered concern.

The Technology team is now focusing on the School website and helping Kate Scanlon update content there. Also, some teachers have their own sites that are not linked to the larger sites – there are questions about whether this is okay and how sites should be developed. The committee is working with teachers when possible to set up sites and ensure they are on the district platform. Best case would be to get all teachers into the training course to learn how to set these sites up properly, but not enough budget and resources are available.

Finally, Chuck mentioned the idea for another Tech Fair – those interested in planning and spearheading the effort should contact him at cpickelhaupt@yahoo.com

General Announcements:

Various announcements from Parent to Parent, Winchester Citizens for a Safer Community and the public library were noted.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:15 a.m.

Respectfully submitted by Cheryl Shepard.